



## Association for Academic Language and Learning

AALL Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1: July, 2009

### Bradley and beyond: Implications for AALL

In an aptly-titled conference by the name of “Surviving Change”, Professor Vin Massaro discussed the outcomes of the Bradley Review for the rapidly-changing Australian higher education environment (Massaro 2009). Since we in ALL units are in the thick of it, it is worth briefly summarising the Bradley Report (Australia 2008), the Government’s response to the Report (Australian Government 2009), and the implications for those of us working in AALL units.

The Bradley Report’s core observation was that Australia

was falling behind OECD standards in higher education and major reform is required to maintain Australia’s relative position in the world education market. This declining performance is due to reductions in funding and consequent increases in staff-to-student ratios. Among the Report’s major recommendations are increases to funding (within demand-driven funding structures based on performance); improvements in participation (especially from low socioeconomic sectors), completion and retention, and increased quality assurance mechanisms.

The Government’s response to the Report (*Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*) developed within a context of Labor’s espoused “nation-building”. Overall the Government commended the Bradley report but committed itself to less drastic, idealistic goals than Bradley recommended. The Government has recommended the creation of a Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, responsible for the identification of concrete

*Continued on page 6*

#### The Bradley Report:

- RECOMMENDED MAJOR, STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO AUSTRALIA’S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
- PROPOSED CONCRETE GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION, ESPECIALLY FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS
- MAY HAVE MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR AALL UNITS AND STAFF WHO WORK WITHIN THEM

### Editors’ note



Hi everyone  
Welcome to the first AALL Newsletter for 2009 – we’re really excited to bring you the news that AALL has so far for this year. We have taken over as editors of the newslet-

ter from Valli Rao, and she certainly deserves our thanks for establishing the newsletter and producing two editions in 2008. We hope to produce two per year as well, so look out for us at the AALL Conference in November, as we’ll be scouting around looking for content. We should have the next edition out before Christmas. We are particularly keen to receive feature articles or any news that is relevant to AALL members such as publications, awards or member interviews. Thanks to everyone who has

contributed to this newsletter; of course, any errors are ours. Please email your contributions or suggestions to us at [chad.habel@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:chad.habel@adelaide.edu.au) and [jennifer.mcguire@scu.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.mcguire@scu.edu.au)



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## AALL news: President's report

AALL NEWS FOR  
JULY, 2009:

- PRESIDENT'S REPORT
- AALL CONFERENCE COMING UP IN NOVEMBER
- REPORTS FROM STATES

"... from the president's desk ..."

I've always wanted to write this heading!

Congratulations to Chad and Jenny for this their first in a long series of co-produced AALL newsletters. No need to tell you how busy we've all been so far this year: more students, more issues and the resources, as far as I hear, are either the same or less than last year. Schedules are tight, but I know you will find time to read this newsletter.

First things first: preparations for this year's AALL conference are well underway and I hear that interest in this important event, both nationally and internationally, is great. If you haven't already registered<sup>1</sup>, I hope you will do so as soon as you've finished reading this

newsletter.

Other news: I hear that a growing number of universities – particularly those preparing for their next AUQA review - are looking rather closely at the implications of implementing the recommendations made through the 'Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities' report<sup>2</sup>, released by DEEWR earlier this year. Make sure you share with us anything of interest happening in relation to these principles.

Another report, the Bradley Review, has serious consequences for the work we do. For example, how many universities have considered the resource implications on the ALL sector of one of the major recommendations of this review, viz to increase

the number of students from low SES?

A great place to share information, discuss issues, ask questions, look for/advertise jobs, etc., is the AALL discussion forum which is now incorporated in the revamped AALL website: new coat of paint, rejigged structure. If you haven't already done so, go and have a look and let us know what you think.<sup>3</sup>

Enjoy this newsletter and see you all in Brisbane in November.

cheers  
alex

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uq.edu.au/aall/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/Pages/Publications.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> [www.aall.org.au](http://www.aall.org.au)

## AALL Conference: 26-27 November, 2009

This year's conference is shaping up to be very exciting, with some 76 submissions for oral presentations and 10 proposals for roundtables having been received. To put that in context, there were about 42 oral presentations at the last conference. Lots of people seem to have been doing lots of interesting things!

To whet your appetite even more, the broad sub-themes under which submissions have been received are:

- Working with research students
- Evaluation of learning assistance and working 1-to-1 with

students

- Collaborations with faculties and other units
- English language diagnostics and development
- Development of academic English and academic skills
- Technology use
- Peer programs
- Foundation and preparatory programs + first year transition
- Working with at risk groups and groups from non-traditional backgrounds

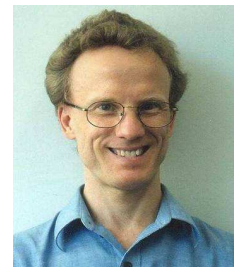
Of course, there is often considerable overlap between the themes. Another interesting development has been the small but significant interest in the conference by people

from overseas. In addition to our New Zealand colleagues, submissions or enquiries about the conference have been received from South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, Dubai and Tunisia!

For more information for those new to the profession, see: <http://www.uq.edu.au/aall>

See you in Queensland in November!

David Rowland,  
UQ



David Rowland, AALL  
Treasurer

## Journal & grant news

If you haven't visited the Association's journal recently (<http://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall>), you'll have missed two interesting recent additions:

- a very timely investigation into how Australian universities have been approaching the issue of post-entry English language assessment by Katie Dunworth (this project benefited from the support of an Association grant); and
- a discussion of an online approach to developing student academic literacy developed by Ursula Wingate and Cecile Dreiss.

Two more articles, one looking at academic integrity policy implementation

at an Australian university and how it could be improved, the other looking at the benefits of "talking with students about what and how they learn" and then sharing this knowledge with colleagues, are currently in the copy and layout editing phases, so should be published in the next couple of weeks. So keep your eye out for them!

Also, with this being a conference year, there will be a big conference issue published just after the conference in December.

Please also keep in mind that the journal publishes book reviews, so if you've read a new release you think others would be interested in, please consider writing up

and submitting a review.

The journal also has a Letters to the Editor section (none received so far though!), so if you wish to comment on or add to any of the articles published so far, we're interested in hearing what you have to say!

The next round of Association grants will be advertised soon, so get your thinking caps on about some possible projects. To get an idea of what has been successful in getting funding in previous rounds, have a look at: <http://www.aall.org.au/grants>

## News from Queensland

The next Learning Network Support meeting will be held at the University of the Sunshine Coast in December. The theme for the meeting is Student Access: - Assertive Solutions. Suggested topics are: Social or academic access strategies for international, refugee, disabled, mature age, first in family, low SES, indigenous students, etc. enabled through

mentoring, peer advising, PASS, etc. Presenters with any experiences, innovations or projects relevant to the theme are asked to contact Michael Carey <[mcarey@usc.edu.au](mailto:mcarey@usc.edu.au)>. There will also be a discussion of the Bradley Report and what the target of 20% low SES and 40% total graduates by 2020 will hold for us as a profession. Any-

one interested in facilitating this discussion is asked to contact Michael as well. The University of Queensland is hosting the AALL Conference on 26 and 27 November this year. On 25 November they are also offering some pre-conference workshops. For more details please see Conference News above.

## News from Victoria

Seventy Victorian members attended this year's AALL meeting at the Caulfield campus of Monash University on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. Two perennial issues were the focus of discussion for the day – how we work with faculties and how ALL adviser workloads can be mapped. In the first part of the day presentations focused on how we work with

embedded workshops, how faculty based advisers work within their cultural setting, and how important it is to cultivate effective relationships. After lunch groups attempted to identify issues related to workload and answer the question, "My job would be made more effective if...". A wide variety of "improvements" were suggested. The day ended with

the presentation of a workload model introduced at RMIT that left advisers in animated discussion as they left – which is exactly the way we like these seminars to end. It was clear that ALL advisers are varied in their different settings, with different work expectations, and modes of operation, but that they are adaptive and innovative as individuals and

### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE STATES:

- QLD: CONFERENCE COMING!
- VIC: HUGE MONASH MEETING
- NSW: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SA: CHANGES, CHANGES, CHANGES



Happy members at Victoria AALL Meeting

members of units in fitting in with different work cultures and different faculty requirements that confront

**Is Your Research IMPOSSIBLE?**  
Take the Quiz!

Does it violate the Laws of Physics?

Yes No My research is to figure out the Laws of Physics

Why hasn't anyone done it before?

a) They were not as smart as me (I am the chosen one!)  
b) No one's bothered to do it (Meh, it's not that useful)  
c) Someone *has* done it, I just don't know about it. (Do I really want to know??)

**Results:** Realistically, it can't be done.  
Academically, it can still be published!

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

JR06E CHM @ 2009

## News from New South Wales

The first AALL Professional Development day for NSW/ACT since the publication of the *Good Practice Principles* was held at Macquarie University on 12<sup>th</sup> June hosted by the Department of Linguistics.

The day was very well attended, attracting more than 50 academic literacy specialists, interested academics

and administrators from a number of different universities, including MQ, UTS, ANU, UW, USyd, ACU, UC, VU and UWS. A wide range of papers were presented around the theme: "Exemplifying 'Good Practice Principles': Case studies in academic literacy."

An opening discussion led by Jean Brick from Macquarie University set the scene for the seven papers that followed. The day concluded with a discussion led by Sue Spinks drawing together various aspects of the *GPP* theme and their implications for stakeholders. All feedback received by the organisers Tessa Green and Stephen Moore was very positive.

PLEASE KEEP TRACK OF ANY STATE NEWS YOU HAVE, AND PASS IT ON TO CHAD AND JENNY AT THE AALL CONFERENCE!

## News from South Australia

On June the 18th SA ALL met at UniSA. Given the large number of staff changes, the initial focus was on meeting new staff working in the area and talking about what is happening at each uni in ALL. Twenty-three members took part and as well as having the opportunity to meet everyone, there were also two presentations: Helen Johnston on Extending Learning into the Professional Community; and Chad Habel on Academic Self-Efficacy in AALL. The meeting was

followed up by a dinner at a local restaurant. Our second meeting will be on November 19th at UniSA.

There have been a number of notable changes in ALL units in SA over the last 18 months. After a review at UniSA in 2008, Learning Connection was restructured and became the Learning & Teaching Unit. In essence, this meant little change for the Learning Adviser team except to increase the number by one Learning Adviser. This new position was used

by the Learning & Teaching Unit to create a one year position for a 'Senior Consultant: English Language Proficiency'. Dr Neil Murray was seconded into this position from the School of International Studies to devise a framework for English Language at UniSA.

At Flinders and Adelaide Universities there have been a number of staffing changes: good luck to all staff who are in transit within this highly mobile profession of ours.

IF YOU KNOW

OF ANY GRANTS OR AWARDS THAT ARE OPEN TO AALL MEMBERS, LET US KNOW SO WE CAN SHARE THE NEWS!

## Awards

Congratulations to our learning skills colleagues at Charles Sturt University (CSU)! The Study Link Team, Division of Student Services, won the CSU 2008 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning.

Team members are: Liz Smith, Beverley Pigott,

Stewart McKinney, Beverley McVilly, Jennifer Scott, and Helen Barton.

The award recognises Learning and Teaching Support Programs and Services that make an outstanding contribution to the quality of student learning and the quality

of the student experience of higher education.

This is a great inspiration to AALL members to both discover and apply for Teaching and Learning Grants—it is, after all, our area of expertise!

## Publications

Judith Booth, *The Recruiter and the Indian Information Technologist: Workplace communication for skilled migrants*

Dr Judith Booth, an academic skills adviser at La Trobe University, has recently published her thesis on the recruitment of Indian Information Technologists. Her research is relevant to us all in AALL in our work with migrants and international students. Her research emphasizes the importance of aligning one's responses in job interviews to institutional goals and explores the notion of 'cultural fit'. You can listen to a podcast of an interview with Judith on SBS radio on 13 May. The link to

the podcast is <http://www20.sbs.com.au/podcasting/index.php?action=feeddetails&feedid=12&id=29732>

Judith's book is available from amazon.com

Margaret Cargill and Patrick O'Connor, *Writing Scientific Research Articles: Strategy and Steps*

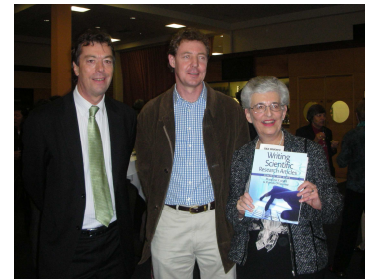
On June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Lirra Lirra Café on the Waite Campus of the University of Adelaide, a large gathering of people assembled to celebrate the launch of a new ALL book – *Writing Scientific Research Articles* by Margaret Cargill and Patrick O'Connor (*School of Earth*

*and Environmental Sciences*). In the beautiful setting overlooking the gardens of Urrbrae House, Professor Mike Brooks, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), congratulated Margaret and Patrick on their work in the Faculty in raising awareness of the 'invisible expectations' in science writing. The book caters for discipline differences ideal for early career researchers and it has a companion website at

[www.writeresearch.com.au](http://www.writeresearch.com.au). Copies are available through Wiley Blackwell. For any other information please contact Margaret at [margaret.cargill@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:margaret.cargill@adelaide.edu.au)



Judith Booth, La Trobe University



Margaret Cargill, Patrick O'Connor, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Mike Brooks, University of Adelaide



Announcing the first combined conference of the Applied Linguistics Associations of New Zealand and Australia

Theme

**Participation and Acquisition;  
Exploring these Metaphors in Applied  
Linguistics**

Keynote Speakers:

Gary Barkhuizen - University of Auckland  
Catherine Elder - University of Melbourne  
Tim McNamara - University of Melbourne  
Lourdes Ortega - University of Hawaii at Manoa

Further information including call for papers available at:

[www.confer.co.nz/alanzalaaconf09](http://www.confer.co.nz/alanzalaaconf09)

## Other conferences

Independent Learning Association (ILA) Conference

The Independent Learning Association (ILA) conference held in Hong Kong from 3-5 June 2009 discussed a number of issues of relevance to AALL. Fiona Henderson from Victoria University advises that 'while the focus of ILA is very much on independent, or maybe autonomous, language learning, as the Keynote Speaker, David Little adroitly noted, (not just English language) there are many synergies. The papers on identity, reflective learning journals, critical thinking, e-learning, motivation and peer tutoring all contained relevant messages for AALL's teaching and learn-

ing practices.'

Here is the link to the Abstracts: <http://ilac2009.elc.polyu.edu.hk/index.php/ILAC/ILAC2009/schedConf/presentations>  
The conference is held biennially and a venue for 2011 is being sought.

ATLAANZ Conference

The annual conference of the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisers Aotearoa New Zealand (ATLAANZ) will be held 18-20 November at Massey University, Auckland. Details at: <http://www.atlaanz.org/conference/2009-conference>  
Please note that AALL members have access to the discounted membership price.





Association for Academic Language and Learning

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For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.aall.org.au/home>

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## Benefits of AALL membership

- Facilitated communication and collaboration among AALL members .
- Professional work towards institutional environments which provide the highest quality of learning experiences for all students and for all staff
- Professional support for the development of core, disciplinary academic language and learning skills and attributes in all tertiary education students
- Professional fostering of the recognition of the academic nature of the work of language and learning development
- Promotion of quality, diversity, internationalisation and flexibility in language and learning development
- Associate Membership with the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisers of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.
- Development and use of publications and conferences
- Lobbying support on issues relevant to AALL members.
- Support through grants and conference subsidies.

*The Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) was formed in November 2005, to provide an organisational body for the growing community of professionals around Australia who work with university students to enhance their learning and academic English. Academic Language and Learning staff work with students, both local and international, at every level from first year through postgraduate. They recognise that the challenges of moving through higher education are not remedial, but ones that every student faces: understanding the cultures of enquiry in academic disciplines, and developing control of their discourses. As encapsulated in its mission statement, "AALL is committed to promoting and providing academic language and learning development through policies, practices and research that build, enhance and extend teaching and learning opportunities for all students and staff in tertiary education settings."*

## Bradley and beyond (continued from page 1)

performance indicators and the monitoring of Universities. This is to be accompanied by major changes to student support arrangements.

Despite the high ideals of the Government's response, Massaro suggested that the 2009 Budget figures painted a less hopeful picture, in that funding commitments to support such goals were not yet evident (2009, p. 7).

Ultimately, these reviews, proposals and changes have serious implications for AALL units around Australia. A new emphasis on quality assurance and key per-

formance indicators means that those with expertise in tertiary teaching and learning may have a role in working to meet such standards. In particular, an explicit focus on retention and completion (and their connection to funding structures) means that academic support will be, more than ever, in the spotlight. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. An emphasis on increased participation (especially amongst low socioeconomic sectors) means there is more work to be done for those of us who work with Foundation or other alternative entry programs, which will then create more demand for quality academic support.

Overall, there is a strong drive to develop a culture of academic achievement at all levels of education, in both teaching and research.

This more general goal of developing a culture of academic achievement is somewhat idealistic, but not out of reach for those of us who provide academic support to tertiary students.

Chad Habel

(For further details on references please email [chad.habel@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:chad.habel@adelaide.edu.au))